

The benefits and ills of media consolidation have been actively debated in recent years, due much in part to the expansion of the largest broadcasting organizations, and an loss of local control at the local level. Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of this consolidation.

Sinclair is a provider of television services to communities throughout the nation, and therefore is entitled to use public airwaves free of charge. However, there is an obligation on their part to serve the public interest -- an obligation that is not only moral and ethical, but required by law. Unfortunately, Sinclair has forgotten their responsibilities to the community, and has instead decided to use this public resource to further their private agenda. Today more than ever, America must be united; the reality, however, does not reflect this. The last thing our country needs is for an organization such as Sinclair to add to the existing division in our nation.

Sinclair's decision to run bitterly unbalanced partisan programming now is clearly evidence of their desire to have an effect on the upcoming election. Their actively requiring local stations to broadcast an anti-Kerry piece removes any remaining vestiges of local control over community programming. Such practices violate the sacred trust put into media companies who manage the public airwaves, and are detrimental to our communities. I urge the Federal Communications Commission to examine this issue thoroughly, and keep it in mind when establishing and reviewing standards for broadcasting corporations.